

## **2005 HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS**

New Jersey's 2005 Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Survey Results show that nearly 94% of New Jersey's public school classes are taught by highly qualified teachers. The percent of classes taught by highly qualified teachers in this second survey remains consistent with 2004's results, though there is a slight decrease in the K-8 area and a slight increase in the 9-12 area. The 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) requires states to report data to the public annually on the number of classes in the public schools that are taught by HQT. In order to be deemed highly qualified, a teacher must have a bachelor's degree, a standard certification for which no requirements have been waived, and documentation of content area expertise in each subject taught. States have until 2006 to reach 100 percent compliance with the HQT provisions.

The 2004-2005 survey was compiled from the Certificated Staff Report completed in Fall 2004. This is a statewide, school-based data collection system that includes every teacher, his/her certification, class assignments and HQT status. This method of collecting information is an improvement over the HQT survey conducted in 2003-2004, because it focuses on individual teacher information by school. The 2003-2004 survey was a summary of HQT status prepared by the district for each school. It did not include individual teacher information. Another advantage in using the information from the Certificated Staff Report is that the survey provides the grade-level teaching assignment of teachers. This is especially important in defining elementary and middle-level teachers, a chief component of the NCLB reporting requirements.

Based on the two different methods of collecting the 2004 and 2005 teacher and class information, it is difficult to make comparisons over the two years in specific

content areas. Comparisons, however, have been made on those categories required for federal reporting. These include the percent of *classes* taught by highly qualified teachers in 2004-2005 in Table 1 and 2003-2004 in Table 2.

Depending on the grade level taught, there are variations in the 2005 statewide percentage of *teachers* who meet the HQT definition (as found in Tables 3 and 4). At the elementary level where all classes are self-contained, 95.6 percent of the teachers meet the definition of HQT. At the middle and high school levels where all classes are departmentalized (students have different teachers for different subjects), 93.4 percent and 94.9 percent of the teachers, respectively, meet the HQT definition. Since more content-specific preparation is needed to teach at the higher grade levels, it is not surprising that the percentage of teachers meeting the federal definition is not as high in departmentalized middle and secondary schools. In these settings, teachers are sometimes asked to take teaching assignments in areas other than those in which they hold an undergraduate degree or the specific credentials required, because of situations such as staffing shortages. Among the district-assigned teachers—those teachers who are assigned to teach in more than one school—88.6 percent meet the HQT definition.

## **Background**

Under NCLB, elementary school teachers satisfy the content preparation requirement as generalists because they must demonstrate knowledge across the range of subjects taught in elementary schools. Since 1985, teachers have automatically met this requirement by passing the Praxis II Elementary Content Knowledge test required for state certification. Veteran teachers also have the option of satisfying the requirement by accruing ten points on the NJ HOUSE Standard Content Knowledge Matrix, through

which teachers receive credit for college coursework, professional development activities related to their content area, and years of content area teaching experience.

Departmentalized middle- and secondary-level teachers must now show content area expertise in *each* core academic subject they teach in order to meet the NCLB definition. The options for meeting this requirement are as follows:

- Passing the required content-knowledge exam in the content. This is already a part of the licensing process for those with K-12 content area certificates and is now a part of the process for the new elementary with specialization certificates for grades 5-8 ; or
- Having an undergraduate major in the content; or
- Having 30 credits equivalent to a major in the content; or
- Having a graduate degree in the content; or
- Having an advanced credential, such as National Board Certification, in the content.

Veteran middle and high school teachers also have the option of accruing ten points on the NJ HOUSE Standard Content Knowledge Matrix for each core academic subject they teach.

Special education teachers who provide direct instruction in core academic content—either as replacement teachers in resource settings or in self-contained classes—must meet the requirements in the same manner as elementary, middle and high school teachers. Special education teachers whose sole role is to provide support or consultation to students with disabilities who are being instructed by HQT satisfy the requirement by having full state certification as a special education teacher.

Also, it is important to note that until the adoption of new regulations by the State Board of Education in December 2003, the state's licensing requirements at both the middle school level and for special education were not aligned to NCLB requirements.

### **Disaggregation by Poverty Level**

The survey information was collected for all schools statewide and has been disaggregated by high-poverty and low-poverty schools. High poverty is defined as the 25 percent of the schools in the state with the largest percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Low poverty is defined as the 25 percent of schools in the state with the smallest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Data in Table 4 show that for all three grade level configurations, low-poverty schools have the greatest percentage of HQT. At the elementary level, the percentage of HQT in low-poverty schools is 97.2 percent, while it is 91.5 percent in high-poverty schools. At the middle level, the percentage of HQT in low-poverty schools is 94.8, while it is 86.5 percent in high-poverty schools. At the high school level, the percentage of HQT in low-poverty schools is 96.6 percent, whereas it is 90.0 percent in high-poverty schools.

### ***Classes in Elementary Schools***

Table 5 provides information about *classes* taught by HQT at the elementary level. Overall, 97.8 percent of general education teachers in self-contained classes meet the definition, compared with 96.1 percent in high-poverty schools and 97.9 percent in low-poverty schools. A somewhat smaller percentage of specialty area classes are taught by HQT. For example, in world languages, 83.9 percent of all world language classes are taught by HQT, while 72.9 percent of classes in high-poverty schools and 86.2 percent of

classes in low poverty schools are taught by HQT. Among self-contained special education classes and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in high poverty schools, 75.4 percent and 76 percent respectively are taught by HQT, significantly lower than other academic subject classes.

### ***Classes in Departmentalized Middle Schools***

In Table 6, data for departmentalized middle school classes show that, statewide, the percent of classes taught by HQT varies from 97.5 percent in language arts literacy to 87.8 percent in special education self-contained classes and in ESL classes. The percentage of math and science classes taught by HQT is slightly lower than the percentage of language arts and social studies classes taught by HQT. High-poverty schools show an appreciably lower percentage of classes taught by HQT, with 88.5 percent in social studies, 87.6 percent in math, 78.7 percent in world languages, 77.1 percent in special education self-contained classes, 73.5 percent in special education resource room replacement, and 80.8 percent in math basic skills. It is important to note that the federal law imposed new requirements for middle school and special education teachers to have specific content expertise in all subjects taught and that many teachers are currently working to complete the HQT requirements by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

### ***Classes in High Schools***

Data in Table 7 report the classes taught by HQT at the high school level. Statewide, the percentage of content area classes taught by HQT ranges from 98.7 percent in the social studies to 93.8 percent in world languages. The data show that 84.3 percent of special education self-contained classes are taught by HQT. This reflects the

federal expectation that all teachers who teach high school level content be highly qualified in each area they teach. Special education teachers in a self-contained setting are responsible for teaching several high school-level subjects. The difficulty of achieving expertise in many content areas is reflected in the data reported. The variation in the data between high-poverty and low-poverty schools is consistent with the variations found with the elementary and middle school levels in Tables 5 and 6.

The New Jersey Department of Education will complete its third HQT survey in October 2005. Teachers who have not yet met the HQT definition have until the end of the 2005-06 school year to satisfy the requirements. They can achieve this by taking college courses, participating in content area professional development programs, or passing the appropriate content area PRAXIS test(s). The state will monitor the progress of districts and schools in decreasing the number of teachers who do not satisfy the federal definition. The 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 School Report Cards include information about the HQT requirement. The 2003-2004 Report Card can be accessed at the following NJDOE web-site: <http://education.state.nj.us/rc/nclb04/index.html> .